DARK HORSE COMICS

#1

THE ORVILLE™

LAUNCH DAY

PART 1 OF 2

OUR COMEBACK WILL BE BIGGER THAN OUR SETBACK!
#backthecomeback™

DAVID A. GOODMAN
DAVID CABEZA
MICHAEL ATIYEH

THE ORVILLE™

CREATED BY SETH MACFARLANE

LAUNCH DAY PART 1 OF 2

SCRIPT
DAVID A. GOODMAN

ART
DAVID CABEZA

COLORS
MICHAEL ATIYEH

LETTERING
RICHARD STARKINGS & COMICRAFT'S JIMMY BETANCOURT

PUBLISHER MIKE RICHARDSON | EDITOR DAVE MARSHALL | ASSISTANT EDITOR KONNER KNUDSEN
DESIGNER BRENNAN THOME | DIGITAL ART TECHNICIAN ANN GRAY

Advertising Sales: (503) 905-2315 | ComicShopLocator.com
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Special thanks to Seth MacFarlane, Andre Bormanis, Brannon Braga, Gerry Duggan, Jason Clark, Brandon Fayette, Rahne Keith, Joy Fehily, Cassy Brewer, Sheri Conn, and Carol Roeder.

THE ORVILLE #1: LAUNCH DAY PART 1 OF 2, September 2020. The Orville™ & © 2020 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. All rights reserved. TM indicates a trademark of Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. Published by Dark Horse Comics LLC, 10956 SE Main Street, Milwaukie, Oregon 97222. BACK THE COMEBACK and the BACK THE COMEBACK logo are trademarks of Diamond Comic Distributors, Inc. Comics Code Authority Seal of Approval is a licensed trademark of Comic Book Legal Defense Fund. Variation used with permission. Dark Horse Comics® and the Dark Horse logo are trademarks of Dark Horse Comics LLC, registered in various categories and countries. All rights reserved. No portion of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the express written permission of Dark Horse Comics LLC. Names, characters, places, and incidents featured in this publication either are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons (living or dead), events, institutions, or locales, without satiric intent, is coincidental. Printed in Canada.

TWENTY YEARS AGO. SCIENCE VESSEL *BOHR*, IN ORBIT OF THE ALIBAR HOMEWORLD.

"ED, THIS DUTY SUCKS."

SCV-119 BOHR

GORDON, REGULAR SHUTTLE MAINTENANCE IS AS IMPORTANT AS ANY JOB ON THE SHIP.

KEEP TELLING YOURSELF THAT.

SCV-119-1

GENTLEMEN...

...IS THAT SHUTTLE READY?

YES, SIR. WE WERE JUST COMPLETING ROUTINE MAINTENANCE.

VERY GOOD.

OUR PLEASURE, SIR. YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL US ROUTINE SHUTTLE MAINTENANCE IS AS IMPORTANT AS ANY JOB ON THE SHIP. WE KNOW THAT ALREADY.

YES... WELL, MALLOY, PREP THE SHUTTLE TO TAKE YCIL TO THE SURFACE.

AYE AYE, SIR...

I'M SORRY TO LOSE YOU, YCIL.

THANK YOU, CAPTAIN. IT'S BEEN AN HONOR SERVING WITH YOU.

IT WAS A PLEASURE SERVING WITH YOU, YCIL.

SCV-119-1

YES, IT WAS... ENSIGN... UH...

I'M ED MERCER.

ED, OF COURSE, SORRY.

SO, DO YOU KNOW WHY YOUR HOMEWORLD HAS DECIDED TO LEAVE THE UNION?

NEW GOVERNMENT'S DECISION. THAT'S ALL I KNOW. HOPEFULLY, THEY'LL REALIZE IT'S A MISTAKE, TED.

UH... ED.

HOW MANY SHIPS DID YOU SAY, BORTUS?

EIGHT KRILL SHIPS, CROSSING INTO UNION SPACE.

LET'S SEE 'EM.

EVEN WHEN THEY'RE NOT SHOOTING THEY LOOK MEAN.

AND THINGS WERE GOING SO WELL.

LET'S NOT ASSUME THEY'VE THROWN OUT THE TREATY NEGOTIATIONS JUST YET.

GORDON, PLOT AN INTERCEPT COURSE. PUT US RIGHT IN FRONT OF THEM.

"WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS..."

...CAPTAIN MERCER?

UM... SORRY, HAVE WE MET?

IT WAS MY SHIP THAT PURSUED YOU WHEN YOU CROSSED INTO KRILL SPACE TWELVE MONTHS AGO.

OH. YOU GUYS... STILL UPSET ABOUT THAT?

IT IS OF NO CONCERN. WE ARE ON A VITAL MISSION TO THE ALIBAR SYSTEM.

MAY WE ASK WHY?

WE OWE YOU NO EXPLANATION. ALIBAR IS NOT A MEMBER OF THE UNION.

YOU'RE RIGHT, IT ISN'T. BUT YOU NEED TO CROSS UNION SPACE TO GET THERE...

AND SOME MIGHT CONSIDER THAT AN ACT OF WAR.

WE HAVE NO QUARREL WITH THE UNION. AT LEAST NOT YET.

BEST FOR ALL CONCERNED WE KEEP IT THAT WAY. WOULD YOU MIND BRIEFING US ON YOUR MISSION?

VERY WELL. PLEASE ADJUST THE LIGHTING ON YOUR SHIP.

WE HAVE BEEN MONITORING THE ALIBAR SYSTEM, AND DETECTED THIS.

WHAT IS IT?

IT IS A MASSIVE WEAPON THEY HAVE BEEN CONSTRUCTING FOR YEARS.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IT'S A WEAPON?

WHAT ELSE COULD IT BE? IT IS PUTTING OUT LARGE AMOUNTS OF QUANTUM INTERFERENCE TO HIDE ITS PURPOSE.

ALIBAR IS LESS THAN ONE PARSEC FROM THE KRILL HOMEWORLD. WE MUST DESTROY IT.

WE HAVEN'T HEARD FROM THE ALIBAR IN TWO DECADES. ATTACKING THEM WITHOUT WARNING IS A LITTLE RASH.

AND EVEN IF IT IS A WEAPON, YOU HAVE NO PROOF THEY INTEND TO USE IT AGAINST YOU.

WE CANNOT WAIT FOR "PROOF"! THE "PROOF" MAY BE THE DESTRUCTION OF OUR HOMEWORLD!

LOOK...

YOU CAN'T CHARGE ACROSS OUR TERRITORY TO ATTACK A PEACEFUL SOCIETY, EVEN IF THEY AREN'T A MEMBER OF THE UNION.

I HAVE MY ORDERS.

OUR GOVERNMENTS ARE FINALLY TALKING. LET'S NOT PUT THAT IN JEOPARDY.

GIVE ME SOME TIME TO INVESTIGATE.

RIDICULOUS. WHY SHOULD WE AGREE TO THAT?

BECAUSE YOU MIGHT BE WRONG.

I WILL TAKE IT UP WITH MY GOVERNMENT.

"TALLA, RAISE ADMIRAL OZAWA AT FLEET HEADQUARTERS."

WE HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE KRILL GOVERNMENT...

THEY HAVE AGREED TO ALLOW YOU TWO DAYS TO INVESTIGATE.

TWO DAYS? THEY DIDN'T GIVE US A LOT OF TIME.

WELL, THE FACT IS, WE DIDN'T WANT IT TO BE MORE THAN THAT EITHER.

WE ANALYZED THEIR DATA. WHATEVER THIS STRUCTURE IS, ITS ENERGY OUTPUT HAS BEEN STEADILY INCREASING. IT MAY POSE A THREAT TO US.

BUT ALIBAR WAS SUCH A PEACEFUL WORLD.

THE OPERATIVE WORD THERE IS "WAS."

WE DON'T KNOW WHAT HAS HAPPENED THERE IN THE LAST TWENTY YEARS. WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHY THEY LEFT THE UNION.

SO YOUR ORDERS ARE TO INVESTIGATE, DETERMINE THIS OBJECT'S FUNCTION. AND IF IT IS A WEAPON...

...YOU HAVE PERMISSION TO ASSIST THE KRILL IN ITS DESTRUCTION.

A PREEMPTIVE STRIKE? THE UNION HAS NEVER STARTED A WAR.

WE HAVE NEVER HAD TO. BUT ALL OUR ATTEMPTS TO CONTACT THE ALIBAR GOVERNMENT HAVE GONE UNANSWERED.

WE DON'T KNOW THE NATURE OF THIS, BUT YOUR ORDERS ARE TO PROTECT THE UNION FROM AN ATTACK. OZAWA OUT.

SO WE'RE TEAMING UP WITH THE KRILL?

ONLY IF WE FIND OUT IT'S A WEAPON. BUT YES.

IF IT IS A WEAPON, THEN ATTACK IS NECESSARY.

WE DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS YET.

ISAAC, GIVE US EVERYTHING YOU HAVE ON ALIBAR.

THE ALIBAR WERE MEMBERS OF THE UNION UNTIL TWENTY POINT SEVEN YEARS AGO. THEY WERE A DEMOCRATICALLY RULED SOCIETY, ON A TECHNOLOGICAL SCALE EQUIVALENT TO EARTH.

UPON REMOVING THEMSELVES FROM THE UNION, THEY HAVE FORBIDDEN OUTSIDERS INTO THEIR SYSTEM.

AND ADMIRAL OZAWA SAID EVEN THE ADMIRALTY DOESN'T KNOW WHY THEY WITHDREW THEIR UNION MEMBERSHIP.

AFFIRMATIVE. THE ALIBAR GOVERNMENT REFUSED TO STATE A REASON.

IT WAS THE DECISION OF A NEWLYELECTED LEADER IS ALL THEY SAID.

HEY ED, REMEMBER THAT GUY ON THE *BOHR*, WHAT WAS HIS NAME?

YCIL, YEAH.

WE HAD TO TAKE HIM HOME WHEN THEY WITHDREW FROM THE UNION.

YOU'VE BEEN TO ALIBAR?

I DIDN'T LEAVE THE *BOHR*. BUT GORDON DID.

IT WAS A LONG TIME AGO. I REALLY DON'T REMEMBER MUCH...

SHUT UP, YOU'RE GOING.

IF THEY DON'T LIKE OUTSIDERS, IT'S NOT GOING TO BE EASY TO INVESTIGATE.

WE'RE PROBABLY GOING TO NEED CLAIRE'S HELP...

THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN ALIBARAN BIOLOGY. THIS DISGUISE WON'T FOOL A SCANNER.

WE'LL JUST HAVE TO COUNT ON THE FACT THAT SINCE THEY DON'T WANT VISITORS, THEY'RE ALSO NOT EXPECTING THEM.

SHOULD I MAKE A "I'M GREEN WITH ENVY" JOKE? I DON'T HAVE ONE BUT I CAN PITCH ON IT.

KNOCK YOURSELF OUT.

BORTUS, YOU'RE IN COMMAND. TWO DAYS IS NOT A LOT OF TIME...

I WILL ENSURE THAT THE KRILL DO NOT ATTACK BEFORE THEN.

WELL, THEY DO OUTNUMBER YOU. BY A LOT...

...SO PROBABLY WANT TO DO YOUR BEST NOT TO START AN ARGUMENT.

I WILL TAKE THAT SUGGESTION. GOOD LUCK.

"THE UNION VESSEL HAS LAUNCHED ITS SHUTTLE."

AND THEY HAVE ACTIVATED THEIR INVISIBILITY SCREEN.

VERY WELL. COORDINATE WITH THE OTHER SHIPS AN ATTACK PLAN TO DESTROY THE *ORVILLE*.

IF THEY DECIDE TO STAND IN OUR WAY, I WANT THEM ELIMINATED AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

"GORDON, DO YOU REMEMBER WHERE YOU DROPPED YCIL OFF?"

YEAH, IT WAS THE CAPITAL CITY.

OKAY, THAT'S AS GOOD A PLACE AS ANY. TAKE US TO THE OUTSKIRTS.

ARE YOU EXPECTING TO FIND HIM?

I DON'T KNOW HOW WE WOULD. BUT IT AT LEAST INCREASES OUR ODDS.

CAPTAIN...

...THE CONSTRUCT, WHATEVER IT IS, IS SITUATED ON THE FAR SIDE OF THEIR SUN. CAN'T GET A GOOD READ ON IT.

AFTER YOU DROP US OFF, GET AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE.

AND STAY IN REGULAR CONTACT.

BRING US BACK A SOUVENIR.

DID WE FORGET TO COME UP WITH NAMES AGAIN?

OH, CRAP.

"FATHER, WHAT IS THE SHIP DOING HERE?"

ECV-197 ORVILLE

THE KRILL ARE ON A MISSION TO DESTROY SOMETHING THEY CONSIDER TO BE A THREAT.

IS IT A THREAT?

WE DO NOT KNOW. THAT IS WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO FIND OUT.

IT IS A FOOLISH MISSION.

WHY DO YOU SAY THAT?

IF WE HAD NOT STOPPED THEM AND THE WEAPON IS A THREAT, THE KRILL WILL HAVE RELIEVED US OF IT.

AND IF IT WAS NOT A THREAT?

THEN A PLANET WE KNOW NOTHING ABOUT WOULD HAVE BEEN ATTACKED BY THE KRILL.

THEY MAY BE INNOCENT.

NO ONE IS INNOCENT. AND YOU AND YOUR CAPTAIN RISK THE LIVES OF YOUR FAMILY PROTECTING A RACE WE KNOW NOTHING ABOUT, A PLANET THAT ISN'T EVEN A MEMBER OF THE UNION.

DO WE NOT WANT TO TEACH OUR SON THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO BE PART OF SOMETHING LARGER THAN OURSELVES? WORKING FOR A GREATER GOOD?

I DID NOT CHOOSE TO WORK FOR THIS "GREATER GOOD."

I JUST HOPE YOUR CAPTAIN HAS NOT GOTTEN US INTO ANOTHER ONE OF HIS MESSES.

YOU EXAGGERATE. THE CAPTAIN HAS NEVER LET US DOWN.

THAT IS SOMETHING ON WHICH WE ALSO DISAGREE.

THIS PLACE DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THE PICTURES.

YEAH...

IT LOOKS LIKE THINGS HAVE GONE DOWNHILL SINCE THEY LEFT THE UNION.

I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED?

YOU TWO...

ARE YOU LOST?

NO, WE'RE JUST... NEW TO TOWN.

VISITORS NEED TO REGISTER.

OH, OF COURSE...

YEAH, THAT'S JUST WHERE WE WERE HEADED...

TO GO REGISTER. JUST ONE QUESTION...

WHERE DO WE GO TO REGISTER?

THERE'S A REGISTRATION OFFICE DOWN THAT STREET.

THEY DON'T LIKE VISITORS.

EVEN ONES FROM THEIR OWN PLANET.

IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE HOW A SOCIETY COULD FALL THIS FAR THIS FAST.

IT'S TIME WE GOT ANSWERS.

ALSO, LUNCH.

THERE YOU ARE.

SO DID YOU COOK THIS YOURSELF?

OF COURSE I DID. HOW ELSE DOES FOOD GET MADE?

YOU DON'T HAVE FOOD SYNTHESIZERS?

OH, HAVEN'T SEEN ONE OF THOSE IN YEARS. MAYBE THE RICH STILL GOT 'EM. AFTER LAUNCH DAY, MAYBE WE'LL ALL GET ONE OF THOSE AGAIN.

SURE. LAUNCH DAY.

THAT'S GOING TO FIX EVERYTHING. YOU JUST WAIT. FINALLY GET THIS WORLD BACK TO THE WAY IT SHOULD BE.

OH SURE.

YEAH, LAUNCH DAY. WHEN IS THAT AGAIN?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN? IT'S TOMORROW. YOU DON'T KNOW WHEN LAUNCH DAY IS?

OH, WE KNEW.

SURE. I WAS JUST JOKING.

WELL, IT CAN'T COME SOON ENOUGH FOR ME. OTHERWISE I MIGHT HAVE TO SHUT THIS PLACE DOWN.

REALLY? WHY?

PEOPLE WHO CAN AFFORD TO EAT OUT DON'T EAT HERE.

"AFFORD."

YOU'RE STILL USING MONEY.

WHAT IS THAT, ANOTHER JOKE? AND SINCE WE'RE TALKING ABOUT IT, THAT'LL BE FIFTY DRACHAS.

POLICE! STOP THEM!

THIS IS NOT GOING WELL.

YOU HAD TO HAVE LUNCH.

JOHN, THIS IS INSANE...

THE CLOSER WE GET TO THAT THING OUT THERE, THE HARDER IT IS TO PILOT.

NAVIGATION'S A MESS, TOO. IT'S MAKING ME THINK THE KRILL ARE RIGHT.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

WELL, THAT MUCH INTERFERENCE IS GOING TO PLAY HAVOC WITH WEAPON GUIDANCE SYSTEMS.

AND IF WE CAN'T AIM OUR WEAPONS, WE'RE TOAST. SPACE TOAST.

BOOM.

ANY SIGN OF POLICE?

DOESN'T LOOK LIKE IT.

TAKE A LOOK AT THIS.

ACCORDING TO OUR HISTORY OF ALIBAR, THEY DIDN'T USE MONEY FOR OVER A CENTURY.

JUST LIKE EARTH. ONCE THERE WERE SYNTHESIZERS YOU DIDN'T NEED IT.

BUT NOW IT'S BACK.

HOW DOES A SOCIETY TAKE SUCH A GIANT LEAP BACKWARD?

ATTENTION, CITIZENS.

IS HE TALKING TO US?

LAUNCH DAY IS UPON US. OUR ENGINEERS AND SCIENTISTS HAVE SPENT DECADES ON THIS PROJECT AND IT HAS FINALLY COME TO FRUITION.

WHEN I WAS ELECTED TWENTY YEARS AGO, IT WAS WITH A PROMISE. A PROMISE FOR A BETTER LIFE FOR ALL THE PEOPLE OF OUR WORLD. AND WE KNEW WHAT STOOD IN OUR WAY...

OUTSIDERS! THE ALIENS OUT IN THE GALAXY WHO HAD INFILTRATED OUR WORLD. THEY ARE STILL AMONG US, STILL UNDERMINING OUR SUCCESS, OUR HAPPINESS. BUT NO LONGER.

FOR TOMORROW IS LAUNCH DAY AND WHEN TOMORROW COMES, THE OUTSIDERS WILL NO LONGER BE A THREAT TO THE PEOPLE OF ALIBAR. REJOICE, MY FRIENDS, TOMORROW YOUR PROBLEMS END.

IT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE HE'S KIDDING.

SO WHATEVER THAT THING IN SPACE IS, IT LAUNCHES TOMORROW.

WE NEED MORE INFORMATION. AND WE'RE NOT GOING TO GET IT HIDING IN ALLEYS.

WHAT ABOUT YOUR OLD SHIPMATE?

REMEMBER THE COP? HE TOLD US TO GO REGISTER. IF YCIL STILL LIVES HERE...

...THEN MAYBE HE'S REGISTERED. GOOD IDEA.

MALLOY TO MERCER, WE'RE APPROACHING THE THING...

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

WELL, IT'S HARD TO SAY FOR SURE...

...BUT IT KINDA LOOKS LIKE A GIANT WEAPON.